

Eastern Washington University's Gender Equity Plan for Athletics

July 2002

Background

RCW 28B.15.460 authorizes the use of tuition and fee waivers to “achieve gender equity in intercollegiate athletics.” The four-year institutions are authorized to waive up to one percent of gross operating fee revenue to achieve equity goals in athletic programs. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and the institutions agree that the waivers have been effective tools for expanding athletic opportunities for women.

The waiver policy went into effect in 1991-92. Since that time, the Legislature has required institutions that would like to continue using waivers to meet progressively more challenging equity goals:

- The use of waivers in 1992-93 was made contingent upon Higher Education Coordinating Board approval of institutions' plans to achieve gender equity.
- By 1998, institutions were required to have female athletic participation equal to the 42 percent rate seen in high school athletics in Washington. All institutions met this standard.
- By June 2002, institutions had to achieve a rate of female athletic participation within five percentage points of the representation of female students between the ages of 17 and 24 enrolled full-time on the main campus. For example, if an institution had a female enrollment of 55 percent, 50 percent of its athletes had to be women. Institutions failing to meet the standard would have to submit a new gender equity plan for approval by the HECB.

Performance: Five of six institutions met the 2002 tuition waiver goal

The table below summarizes institutional performance regarding the June 2002 requirement. Only Eastern Washington University failed to meet the five percent standard. Eastern has submitted a new gender equity plan for the Board's approval.

	Number of women athletes	Percent of athletes who are women	Percent of full-time undergrads (17-24) who are women	Gap between female enrollment, athletic participation	Meets June 2002 goal?
CWU	251	53.5	53.0	(0.5)	yes
EWU	186	41.0	57.0	16.0	no
TESC	57	55.9	57.1	1.2	yes
UW	324	47.7	51.3	3.6	yes
WSU	248	46.2	50.4	4.2	yes
WWU	184	51.5	56.4	4.9	yes

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Eastern's plan would bring it into compliance with the five percent requirement. If the Board approves the plan, the University will be able to continue issuing gender equity waivers to athletes in 2003-04 and beyond.

The plan has three elements: *roster management* (expanding the rosters of women's teams, reducing the rosters of men's teams), *program elimination* (reducing the number of male athletes by eliminating an athletic program), and the *addition of a women's sport or sports*.

1. Roster management

Beginning in the 2002-03 academic year, Eastern will strive to meet the five percent goal through "roster management," expanding the rosters of existing women's teams and capping the squad sizes of men's teams. *The changes Eastern proposes would increase the number of female athletes from 186 to 235 (by 49 participants) and decrease the number of male athletes from 255 to 205 (50 participants).* Squad sizes will fluctuate a bit, but Eastern plans the following changes in athletic participation:

Increasing roster sizes on women's teams

	2001-02 participation	2003-04 participation needed to reach 5% goal	Change
Outdoor track and field	45	65	+20
Indoor track and field	45	50	+ 5
Golf	9	12	+ 3
Basketball	12	16	+ 4
Volleyball	15	16	+ 1
Soccer	37	43	+ 6
Tennis	11	15	+ 4
Cross country	12	18	+ 6
Totals	186	235	+49

Cutting roster sizes on men's teams

	2001-02 participation	2003-04 participation needed to reach 5% goal	Change
Outdoor track and field	55	42	-13
Indoor track and field	55	42	-13
Basketball	14	14	0
Football	93	85	- 8
Tennis	11	10	- 1
Golf	8	0	- 8
Cross country	19	12	- 7
Totals	255	205	-50

2. Program elimination

Eastern's plan would reduce the roster of the men's golf team to zero, eliminating the program. This action would leave the University with six men's athletic programs.

3. Adding a women's sport or sports

For two years, Eastern has been studying the possibility of adding a new women's sport or increasing women's opportunities for participation with a development track and field program.¹ The institution investigated the feasibility of adding skiing, swimming, softball, and development track and field. It considered expenses, facilities, coaching needs, squad sizes, the availability of athletes, the proximity of potential competitors, the potential for league affiliation, NCAA requirements, and other factors. Eastern concluded that development track and field and skiing were the most feasible new programs, and plans to move forward with a development track and field program in 2002-03 and, it hopes, a ski team in 2003-04.

Assessment

Eastern's administration has approved the plan. If put into effect, the plan – through roster management – would achieve the five percent standard set by the Legislature. If Board approval rests simply on whether the Eastern plan would or would not achieve the five percent standard, the plan should be approved because the institution will reach the statutory goal if it follows through on its plan. Yet some may be alarmed at the prospect of cutting 50 existing opportunities for male athletes as part of the plan for achieving the waiver statute's equity goal.

Alternatives

It appears that Eastern has few alternatives to the approaches sketched in its plan. To achieve the 52 percent standard without eliminating any roster spots on men's teams in 2001-02, the University would have needed approximately 87 more female athletes. If its existing women's teams and development track and field absorbed 49 athletes (as its equity plan suggests is possible), it would have to have added 38 more women's roster slots. Adding two more sports from the list of the most feasible options Eastern considered – swimming and softball – would have generated the 38 roster spots, with a projected cost of roughly \$250,000. This action would have yielded 51.7 percent female athletes at Eastern, just barely bringing the school into compliance with the five percent standard.

¹ In development programs, athletes who need to improve their skills to compete at the Division I scholarship level compete against community colleges, NAIA, and Division II and III opponents. These are non-scholarship athletes.

RESOLUTION NO. 02-24

WHEREAS, State law requires that the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) report every four years, beginning December 1998, on institutional efforts to comply with state requirements for gender equity in intercollegiate athletic programs; and

WHEREAS, State law authorizes the use of tuition and fee waivers to achieve gender equity in intercollegiate athletics; and

WHEREAS, Tuition and fee waivers are recognized as an effective tool for expanding athletic opportunities for women; and

WHEREAS, By June 2002, all institutions were to achieve a rate of female athletic participation within five percentage points of the representation of female students between the ages of 17 and 24 enrolled full-time on the main campus; and

WHEREAS, Any institution that was not within the five percent requirement is to have a new plan achieving gender equity in intercollegiate athletic programs approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board before granting further waivers after the 2002-03 academic year; and

WHEREAS, Five of the six public baccalaureate institutions in this state met the 2002 tuition waiver goal; and

WHEREAS, Eastern Washington University failed to meet the five percent standard and has submitted a new gender equity plan for the Board's approval; and

WHEREAS, Eastern's new plan will bring it into compliance with the five percent requirement and the University would be allowed to continue issuing gender equity waivers to athletes in 2003-04 and beyond;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves Eastern Washington University's 2002 gender equity plan for athletics.

Adopted:

July 31, 2002

Attest:

Bob Craves, Chair

Pat Stanford, Secretary